

The Fountain

Janet K. Wallace

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Summary

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Description:

A tale about Sir Fratley's personal worth and his struggle to remember who he is, who he was and what he will become.

1. I

— The Fountain —

Beneath a sky on the verge of falling,
Within a kingdom obscured by clouds,
Regret is a secret fiend
Of the most unfortunate of men.

A Burmecian, our protagonist, stands near a
blurred window.

Half-man, half rat, he leads a normal life,

A coward in disguise.

And wide are his delusions, gone is the pride

Of who once was a legendary knight

Driven by duty and strength

“That knight”, he says, “He lives through me as a
foolish child”.

How come everything came as it is,
The turn of tides, the unforgettable silhouette,
An unfathomable reminiscence,
Deep red is the color behind his eyes,
Now he lives in self-doubt.

He does not remember anything, anything at all.
His childhood, his adulthood,
His friends, his girlfriend,
He pours some liquid in the glass
As he watches time pass by and people move on
Outside, in the streets washed by rain,
Small children play in the backyard
Of homes devastated by war.

For once he does not feel alone in his solitude

When everything and everyone

Are united in a silent chord.

Singing upon the remains of dead mothers and
wives,

Dancing upon the graves of ordinary men,

Those are the new Burmecians.

Free of sin, free of guilt,

They laugh as they throw mud at each other,

But the rain won't let them keep the dirt.

They talk as if they led a life in distance,

But the rain won't let them move away.

Away from the misery, away from the darkness,

Away from grief, away from sadness,

They all fake a smile
As they lead their meaningless lives.

2. II

“One day I will become a Dragon Knight”, he
said in his youth.

He was like one of those kids outside,
So many goals and dreams were put aside.
He played jump rope every day so he could jump
higher
Higher, higher than a Dragon Knight.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday,
Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday,
Those were the days when nothing else mattered,
When failure made him stronger, and aware of
the world’s mishaps.

Yes, how he screamed all through the night,

Yes, how his tears streamed down under the
morning light,
Living in a dreamworld, a soul mundane
Who did everything to jump high and high,
Time and effort were not in vain,
He grew up and became a Knight... So what!?
He changed a lot within a world that has not
changed at all.

3. III

Living under her own shadow for all she has been
known,

Built with the effort of a thousand souls,
Once a land of eternal downpour,
The birthplace of Gaia's best warriors,
Remember when you were young and wild?
Burmecia, land of empty fallows.
Burmecia, land of lonely foreigners.

And they say you were once great and proud,
Different words in different places,
The old who grew on her prime
Tell a story of brother against brother,
The betrayal of a blood promise
Over the ownership of a worthless gem,

Terrible events cascading like dominoes,
Jigsaw falling into incorrect places,
Conflicts that brought so much needless lament.

In every infant's cry of fear,
In every hapless soldier's sigh,
Grief, ruin and despair,
Famine, pestilence, skeletons in the crowd,
Burmesia, the self-reflecting image of the end of
times.

4. IV

He can't stop reminiscing a past that ain't his
own,
A past where he took himself seriously.
He grips himself with determination,
He makes two from one and one,
He stood home, sat on bed, laid his head upon the
pillow
To contemplate the ceiling as if there was
something up there,
He sees nothing special, nothing worth his time.

He stares at himself in the mirror,
No desire to improve his muscles, no ill thoughts,
A mere reflection, nothing new, nothing unique,
So manic, so fearless, must be the perfect man,

But the perfect man would have found a better
way

To not delve into his own petty problem.

A desperate man, he can't take a leap to escape
the abyss

Nor does he think of leaving.

He put himself in a lot of trouble

To make his thoughts disappear like clouds,
Nothing left but screaming, traumatized atoms.

Outside the window, a land of false perfections,

Of false man, false hope, false tears of god

Washing away the last remaining goodness

In all the filthy misery.

5. V

Here he comes,
The boy who tried to vanish to another plane
Left his mind drift him away
To a place with no sight and smell.
In his letter, he left a single farewell
For those who cared,
And as he rose above reason
Outside the sparkling rain,
Suspended in the air, a tense soul on flight,
The boy who lived by someone else's fame
Was seven feet high.

Here he comes,
The boy who floated above his childhood lane,
A caged bird for years yearning to be set free

Breaking through the mist with such ease,
In the distance, an ever crumbling landscape
Draws the thin line between nobility and
paradise.

Here he comes,
The boy who contemplated the deep blue sky
With such wonder and awe
Is no longer alone in his own island,
Blissfully unaware of the passing of time.
Paralyzed by the faint morning breeze,
Radiant ice formed on the tip of his wings,
Sand poured out of his sad green eyes
And thoughts of failure overcame his fragile
mind
As he flew to the desert where the harrowing
died.

Here he comes,
The boy with a naive and humble soul
Heading close to twilight under the evening star.
There he saw a man with no recollection of a past
life,
Days were spent on a secret journey within his
mind,
A ceaseless murmuring of silence vows,
He failed no matter how he tried.

Here he comes,
The man who stood on the corner of an
abandoned town
Found near the remains of a hollow tree,
More than alive, a fearless knight covered in
fright,
Amused to death, he barely survived.
His skin cold to the human touch,
It's been so long since he spoke

In a world overrun by all he has been deprived,
Thoughts once noble and pure
Of a serene warrior who crossed the blue knoll
Belonged to a heart of gold crumbled to dust.

“Here once lied a peaceful settlement
Obliterated by a single heavenly spear,
It rained ashes for seven days
In this barren and desolate land
Where it used to be home “, he said.
He tells a story about how it took seconds
Of Odin’s time to take their lives,
His lack of consideration is not his fault
As a weapon does not know to where it fires,
Or that history can fade away into a mushroom
cloud.

Here he comes,
The boy who saw no mercy from the leaden sky,
With each step a garden blooms under his feet
As he finds himself company
Alongside a lonely wanderer, an earth-bound
misfit
Stranded in his own quicksand island
Of a thousand in this wide sea,
It's been so long since he nurtured dreams of
leading
A new life away from this unforgiven misery.
The boy grew a pair of wings
And wished he was no longer here,
His future and past self spoke as one
And with a single thought, they were gone.

6. VI

The earth's smell fills his nose,
Takes his breath away,
Makes him think of Tuesday night,
A day he felt desperate to connect with people.
Nothing could be as frightening
As interacting with people,
A perfect day becomes miserable
When you stand near judging people.

He tried to write a single world on paper,
Something about love and compassion,
Something about things he did not have anymore,
Something about not comparing himself to
strangers,
Something about buying bread for tomorrow.

He felt a lot more stranger than he did yesterday,
A day frozen in time.

True enough,
He studies his breath with precision,
He realizes how his breath sounds like.
The sound of a breath, his mind agreed,
Soothing and quick vanishing air
That comes and goes
Without warning, move along,
Thunder roars in the skies,
That's a fact.

Working against time,
His mind studies the beauty of his breath,
Meaningless chatter to occupy the mind.
It's a matter of feeling uneasy

About the size of a town,
A place where one breath collides with another
Without a reason.

One breath, two gees in eggs,
Three people who live within brick walls,
Four sweet fennels make him queasy,
Five years it took for him to be found,
Six months he stood in a leaky boat,
Seven are the words of his name,
Fratley, a man made of failure.

Breathing on a cold window pane
In which he draws a shape with his fingers,
The shape of a heart in agony,
“Such a beautiful shape”, he thought.
His mind studies the beauty of her body,
Her body covered in pale clouded yellows,

A picture of lady Dynamine
And her young sister Melonella,
A pair of Blue Morpho eyes,
And he was a plain tiger on bed
Watching a Great Spangled Fritillary
Dancing upon a yellow corn field.

He noticed something sad about the view,
No water, no birds, ruins of another country,
Visions of what could be real and what could be
not,

Then, all of sudden, he forgot.
“Sadness can be seductive”, he mumbles,
As he cried a thousand tears like a weeping
willow.

7. VII

A knight shall never betray any of his kind,
Here to serve your Majesty,
A fool under a noble's disguise.
Coward in golden robe!
A parasite appealing to the crowd,
His source of worship power.

Deceit to be followed,
A hundred people yell rhubarb
To a slender frame creeping back to life,
His nervous systems all awry,
Curious child,
A moth extinguished by light.

8. VIII

In my dreams,
I found myself standing in a room
Unlike any other I've ever seen.
A room filled with dolphin statues,
A black piano in the middle,
Small trees lying on the corners
Of pillars raised in marble and limestone,
Something about the room brought peace
To my tormented soul.

From within the room
I saw my neighborhood,
Pictures of a past life left behind
Appeared as I played the piano.
The house where I used to live

Is all but ruins,
The garden where Freya and I used to play?
It's empty, all the children have run away.
The church where mother used to pray
Is a place with a lack of faith
And signs of decay.

This is the palace of our Majesty
Who ran away like a coward,
A portrait of father hangs in the hall,
He did not live to see Burmecia's downfall.
This is the land where I once found dignity,
But what else is there left
Other than the bitter aftertaste of impunity?

The last thing I saw before I woke up
Was a wounded Burmecian.

A soldier who lost his home, lost his sight,
He got an important message to deliver,
Nothing else mattered, no such reward
For a man who was taken away from his family.

He walked above the plains,
Marched across the river,
No pale shelter, no place to shiver,
In fear of death he whimpered.

He is just a man, not the best,
In his journey he finds no rest
Until he reached for Lindblum, his destination.
“Our kingdom is being attacked”, He begged on
his knees

As he spoke about the horrors he saw in his
nation.

“The King and I are friends”, The Regent said
As he ordered reinforcements to be sent,

And the Burmecian soldier heard his kind words
Before he died under the heat of the final sunset.

Then I woke up
Staring at the ceiling,
Wondering to myself
About living in a world
Where you can be anything
As you forget to be unique.

I have forgotten who I am,
I have forgotten who I was,
Why figure yourself out
If no one can hear you shout?

What makes you think

You are everything the world needs
When nothing has been accomplished
To overcome your past misdeeds?

Standing on the threshold,
Caught in fiery anger,
My memories faded into mold,
The world made less sense as I grew old.

9. IX

When you think about breathing,
it's the only thing you can think about.
You almost feel like taking control of your breath
When you realize you've been breathing
Since day one, day two, day three
And it goes on to the present day,
Where you find yourself at home
Searching for the life you need to find
In order to get out of this mess
You've put yourself in.

He speaks these words like a mantra:
"You think, therefore you are."
You breathe, therefore you are, too.
You think about breathing in a certain way,

You are as well.
When your thoughts revolve around
One thing at time,
Or multiple things,
You are...
As in, something, or someone, Or both “.

“There’s a kind of comfort in knowing”, he says,
“That, although we are all alone
In some regards, there are millions,
If not, thousands of other islands
In this vast ocean,
And we could just go there
As everything would still remain here
In some way “.

10. X

I got an Airship
Flying above the sky,
We produce engines
Fueled by Mist.
We got Airships
All across this continent,
A hundred men's pride.

We got Airships (We got Airships!)
All across this continent (All across this
continent!),
We're flying above the clouds (Our heads above
the clouds!),
They make us powerful (Lindblum is powerful!),
Why can't you understand? (We don't
understand!).

We produce engines (More and more engines!)

Fueled by Mist (We own the Mist!),

But who needs an Airship... anyway?

We got Airships (Thousands of Airships!),

They don't mean a damn thing (Not a damn
thing!),

I got an Airship to give (We got Airships to
give!),

Factories all across this continent (All across this
continent!),

A hundred men's pride (They give us pride!),

Our Kingdom is perfect in every way (Perfect in
every way!).

Consider it as a gift of peace (Our gift of peace!)

To end all hostilities (No more hostilities!),

But we don't need Airships (We don't need
Airships!),

Not in Burmecia (God bless Burmecia!)
And we'd rather stay on the land (Both feet on
the land!),
So why can't you understand? (They'll never
understand!).

11. XI

My thoughts lead me astray
As I am pretending to see the future
Outside a world I didn't make.
Of course I'm thinking about Alexandria,
A kingdom far miles away
From this wreckage known as Burmecia,
Land of Eternal Sorrow.

It's not my fault I was born here
In a land built by the downtrodden
When I could be like the brave men
Who sail by the sea.

Every man wants to find success

Like the knights of old times,
Who reached for their goals
And disappeared into the mist
To be never seen again.

12. XII

Remove belt,
Remove armor,
Remove hair,
Remove spear,
Remove tassel.

“Our love was special like water down the drain”,
Said Freya as we stood by each other near a
fountain,
Located in the center of an abandoned square
That once shed of life other than grass
Growing between the cracks on the walls
And the path of cobblestone below our feet.

Remove rain,

Remove mind,
Remove thoughts,
Remove skin,
Remove pain.

Noticing the ruins surrounding us,
I swear I could see myself in them,
As in yet another broken piece
Freya desperately wanted to rebuild
And bring it back to its original state.

She wants to do it all by herself
Even knowing she will only get hurt by result,
A kind of bravery to be appreciated
Despite how hopeless it might seem.

Remove ears,
Remove feet,

Remove snout,
Remove dreams,
Remove mouth.

“I have been thinking about the way
You used to talk to me “, she said,
“But now it seems we never talk at all”.
Meanwhile, I got a thousand other reasons
To remember my former self of years ago.
“I did not mean to sound rude, but heroic”, I said,
Reminiscing about the day I had to leave
Burmecia
And everything I cared for behind, including
Freya.

Remove body,
Remove eyes,
Remove teeth,

Remove laugh,

Remove wit.

“How come it took three days

For our world to collapse? “, I said,

And as much as I, Freya had no answer

But a tense silenced followed and stood

Upon us like a cloud of uncertainties.

“How did you survive Cleyra’s downfall?”, she
asked,

And, suffering from a momentary lack of words,

The only answer I had for that question was:

“I don’t remember. At all”.

Remove “F—”

Remove “-rat—”,

Remove “-ley”,

Remove “Iron—”,

Remove “-tail”,

What else is there left to improve

If all you can do is “remove”?

13. XIII

I own you
My entire life,
You own me.
I know what's going on,
Of course I do,
You know.

And I know
That you know
We can make it through
The road that remains wide open
While our dreams are alive,
We know.

I know about
Those decisions you've made
For the sake of us,
But you ought to respect me
For what I am,
Not for what I was,
Don't you know?
Only fear can block the way
To something greater
Than what we knew.

14. XIV

Never thought I'd be betrayed
By someone who used to be a friend,
I took a nap and had
A sisyphian nightmare
Where I saw myself as a slave
Pulling a boulder upon a hill,
Slide and tumble,
Slide and stumble,
Rise and tumble,
Tumble and stumble.

I pretend to understand
What it means to be a man,
Hiding and scared, hiding and scared,
Can't you see I'm here talking?

Your name might be God
But it does not mean that much to me,
Slide and tumble,
Slide and stumble,
Mumble and stumble,
Rise and tumble.

I stared at your green fingers,
You told me it would be fine
To give up the hunt to settle
A new life on a hill, on a hill,
Survive, sleep, drink, die,
Perfect addictions of a narcotized life,
Slide and tumble,
Slide and stumble,
Rise and mumble,
Slide and crumble.

Yellow girls are running backwards
Towards a fountain in all its glory,
Transcending time and space
To somewhere mundane,
Two man in a park watching ducks
And feeding passersby,
Slide and tumble,
Mumble and stumble,
Rise and tumble,
Mumble and crumble.

It's so fun to live underground
Away from the noisy crowd,
No one speaks, no one talks
Within a place of healing
Where they respect you for what you are

And they always leave flowers in the ceiling,

Slide and tumble,

Slide and stumble,

Crumple and mumble,

Tumble and stumble.

15. XV

“Listen, have you ever noticed how
The birds look sad when they’re put
Inside of a cage? “, she said.

“I haven’t, but that’s just the way
They pretend to look like whenever
They’re put in a cage “, I said.

“Then, we’re all birds waiting
To be released outside the cages
We put ourselves in “, she said.

“Well, I’d rather be inside
Of a warm cage than walk around

In the cold rain “, I said.

“At least, I brought the umbrella
So we can appreciate the rain
In its ethereal beauty “, she said.

“Indeed, I do love the smell of rain but
I wish I could go home to finish
Writing one of my books “, I said.

“You know, you can leave it for later
Because we’ve got a whole afternoon
To spend here “, she said.

“Okay, I suppose you’re right,
But I’m not so sure where we are

Supposed to be right now “, I said.

“We’re at home, that’s all that matters
At the moment and nothing else
Should interfere “, she said.

“I can’t believe millions were slaughtered
On these streets where people used
To greet me everyday “, I said.

“Reality teaches us all we know,
Though there are days I feel like
Not knowing anything “, she said.

“I understand, I also feel the same
On mindless days where I can be

Truly myself and no one else “, I said.

“Ignorance is a bliss amidst disaster,
But it can also lead to disappointment
If you lose yourself in it “, she said.

“See, everything is as it is meant to be
And science is never wrong because
Gravity never fails us “, I said.

“Of course, I can tell gravity exists
By just watching the raindrops
Hit the floor “, she said.

“The rain feels very light and thin
Compared to the heaviness

Of yesterday's sorrows “, I said.

“I heard rumors about the disappearance of mist
And the lack of a desert breeze
That came from the northwest “, she said.

“That's the place where Cleyra's trunk
Used to stand at before it was
Blown to oblivion “, I said.

“I want to stay here but I feel like
Going somewhere where there becomes here
As we get there “, she said.

“Everywhere feels so empty these days,
And I do miss the children even when

They were kind of annoying “, I said.

“Speaking of children, I wonder
If we have to repopulate this country
All by ourselves “, she said.

“Don’t be silly! That would require
A lot more effort than what
We got on our own “, I said.

16. XVI

No breathing, no hearing,
No movement, no thoughts,
No colors, no sight,
No scent, no smell,
I'm not leaving home tonight,
So quiet, so silent.

I saw a lovely flower
Growing in the yard,
It was quite a sight,
But then a wind blew by
And it swayed its petals away,
What a shame, how sad it was.

Another day goes by, all I do is cry.
I feel better, you feel stronger,
Sometimes I do really wonder
Why I find myself counting odd numbers,
I try to forget about the day we first met
Our souls within each other's stares.

My skin grew cold
As I have spent hundred years
Buried in the snow
Searching for your whereabouts
To prove they were wrong
About your sudden demise.

I know I tried,
But I could not have
The best of everything.

So many years away from home
And I could not care
If you never saw me as your friend.

I hope you are out there
And hear what I say:
I told you my weaknesses,
I never tried to hide them,
And I will forgive your indifference
As we move away from a life led by ignorance.

17. XVII

Who was it who offered us no mercy?

Who was it who attacked us with such ease?

Who was it who called us subhuman filth?

Who was it who helped spread the disease?

Who was it who silenced our voices in the middle
of the night?

Who was it who looked after us while in fright?

Who was it who forged our country's identity?

Who was it who sold our tails to the rich?

Who was it who waged wars against them
before?

Who was it who denied progress and closed its
doors?

How much suffering is left for us to endure

When our homeland offers no shelter

And there are no more apples to consume?
How our very heroes falter
When their brave hearts beat in stillness and
sorrow.
Late at night, Silence remains in the streets,
What use is there to bite the hand that feeds
When there is nothing else you can borrow?
All there is see is but ruins
And we have paid for our father's sins.

Who was it who claimed this land to be ours?
Who was it who brought us knowledge and pain?
Who was it who butchered each of our limbs?
Who was it who killed Burmecia and stole its
pride?
Who was it who cut my tongue so I can no longer
speak?
Who was it who covered their children with
flowers?

Who was it who took away our lives in disdain?

Who was it who judged us by our skins?

Who was it who lost everything but their sight?

Who was it who told us to turn the other cheek?

18. XVIII

You hide yourself away in shame
Under the relentless quicksand,
It grabs your soul as you vanish to a better world
That lies somewhere between here and there
And you come to think: “Is this the sort of thing
One of my ancestors had to go through
In order to prove himself to others
After he left without saying a word?”

All these questions remain while you’ve been
stuck in here for days,
The underground isn’t your home, how come you
sank so low?
“If everyone’s here, then why do I still feel
alone?”, you say.

“It makes no sense, and to be fair, I don’t think it
ever did.

A feeling that comes and goes like high tides and
fierce hurricanes...

It’s just me who’s complaining about something
no one needs an explanation for “.

If there is no gold buried under the sun
That offers heat in the ground above,
Then what else should be done?
Dig any further and you may find
Not a reward, but your own grave
Waiting for your own body.

19. XIX

Don't want to be upset,
Don't want to be filled with dread,
Don't want to be a child,
Don't want to shed a smile.
Don't want to forget my address,
Don't want to take her dress,
Don't want to go outside,
Don't want to sleep tonight,
Don't want to sing when it's raining,
Don't want to know my heart is aching.

Don't want to be tied into any chains,
Don't want to feel any weight on my breath,
Don't want to abandon my flesh,
Don't want to disappoint myself,

Don't want to move away to somewhere else,
Don't want to wait for your visit in a few days.

Don't want to scream and shout,
Don't want to be harsh and loud,
Don't want to grow delusions,
Don't want to crawl beneath the mirror,
Don't want to hide my perversions,
Don't want to drink any liquor,
Don't want to be ashamed whenever I think about
you,
Don't want to whisper my name if I have no one
to talk to.

Don't want to cry when you're not here,
Don't want to fall for your deceit,
Don't want to be filled with greed,
Don't want to hurt someone I don't know,

Don't want to run away in fear,
Don't want to see you devoured by the limbo.

Don't want to commit any mistakes,
Don't want to face any stakes,
Don't want to comment about my obsessions,
Don't want to understand your pain,
Don't want to give the wrong impressions,
Don't want to lie to myself again.

Don't want to tell the truth,
Don't want to keep the same attitude
Don't want to act like a fool,
Don't want to fall in love, it's so uncool.

Don't want to miss my way,
Don't want to lose my faith,
Don't want to touch the flame,

Don't want to stay the same,
Don't want to crave disaster,
Don't want to stare at the sun,
Don't want to rest on the grave,
Don't want to look back in anger,
Don't want to fall into the abyss,
Don't want to long for someone I dearly miss,
Don't want to say "I want you darling" to no one,
Don't want to spend the last night on earth all
alone,
Don't want to say goodbye for those who are yet
to be gone,
Don't want to question whether I'm a boy or a
girl, it shouldn't matter anyway.

20. XX

“Without her I am not whole”, I say,
Standing on top of the world,
No one but me to watch the final sunset
Of a pitiful day I wish I could forget.
I can stand on my own without Freya’s aid,
Yet I miss her so dearly despite knowing
I’ll be back home as a better man.
Whoever brought you here and now,
Nobody gives an answer, nobody ever does.
In my silence, I find one of the few truths in life
Is that, not matter how loud is your shout,
It isn’t as loud as the fall from grace,
The madness, the thoughtfulness
Of a man whose worst enemy is himself.

So God forgive Burmecia and all the wretched
souls

Who were never born in a land filled with pain
and remorse.

Immerse your soul in love, feel happiness,
And for every breath of mine that breaks a sound,
I ask “Whose sorrow is that hanging on the
wall?”;

Then I look around and I see no barriers left.
Below me I find the silhouette of a traveller in a
mountain range,

Maybe he knows I’m here, maybe he doesn’t,

But if there’s one thing that remains true
Is that all of the Burmecians who are yet to be
forgiven

Know, since birth, that consciousness is the seed
of contradiction.

We were born in a world full of deception,
A world where the murderer has more right than
the victim,

And for centuries we endured much suffering
Until our very history ceased to exist
As a result of years of fragility and isolation
Which led to our complete annihilation.

From here, I see the wealth blaming the needed
for their condition,
So many birds in search of a cage to avoid the
low sun
Whose heat permeates through every solid
matter.
I see many souls who oppose the kingdom come
as dictated by a few,
Sisters slaying her brothers and mothers slaying
her sons,
But soon we'll become nothing, we may as well
become one.
We don't know, we should try to be pursuing life
instead of death

Because when we die, it's over, but life always
continues

And if we may exist for a few more centuries,

What's worth living in a world that preaches
entropy,

Humiliation and the hunger of those that live in
agony?

So God forgive Burmecia and every life we
ruined on this mortal plane,

The universal emptiness that resides within the
flesh

Glow like the funeral pyre of a hundred men.

I'm not ready for the final sacrifice despite my
strength at home

Not being enough to suffice, but I see that I'm not
alone

In my doubts, they can be shared to someone who
will understand

The kind of pain we inflicted on others and as well as in ourselves.

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